



Artwork by Andrea (Zixuan) He

#### IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome  
Research Corner  
Intersections  
Events  
Student News  
Alumni Achievements

#### ABOUT THE CENTER

The Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy seeks to enhance educational opportunities and facilitate innovative research through community based research and discussion. The Center is a collaborative effort of faculty, staff, and students and community development actors. The center conducts community based research and facilitates discussions about urban problems and innovative policy and practice solutions.

# RWVC NEWS

June 2022

## Welcome

The Ralph W. Voorhees Center is excited to welcome

*The 2022-2023 Ralph W. Voorhees Public Service Fellows*

Arielle Cohen, Anamika Desai, Nina Gohel, Shreya Gupta and  
Taha Umar

#### *Student Researchers*

Esther Colon, Undergraduate, who is interested in gentrification.

Erica Copeland, MCRP Candidate, who is interested in promoting social equity in urban environments.

Kyle Cruz, MCRP, who is interested in affordable housing.

Mila Hamilton, MCRP Candidate, who is interested in community development and housing as pathways for reparative and transformative justice.

## New Faculty Affiliates



Andrea Restrepo-Mieth is joining the Bloustein School in September 2022 as an Assistant Professor. Her research examines the emergence and stabilization of urban planning and city management institutions that improve the equitable and sustainable provision of local public goods and basic services in cities in the Global South. She conducts research on how community-based organizations, urban social movements and civil society organizations get their ideas and knowledge incorporated into planning processes and outcomes. Her research is based in Colombia, Ecuador, and Laos and covers a range of topics including water and sanitation lifelines, water corporatization, metropolitan environmental planning, and climate change adaptation planning. She holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University, a MPP from the Lee Kuan Yew School, National University of Singapore, and a BA in Economics and International Relations from SUNY at New Paltz.



Naomi Uchida is a Fulbright Scholar and Professor from the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Saitama University in Japan where she teaches classes in urban planning. She received her Ph.D. in Architecture from Waseda University and an M.A. in Urban Design and Planning from University of Washington (Seattle). She is a member of several committees of local government including city planning commissions. Uchida engages in field surveys in Ishikawa, Saitama and Tokyo prefectures while working with communities, non-profit organizations, and local governments on urban projects. Her research focuses on Japanese gentrification, urban revitalization, and community development.

---

## RESEARCH CORNER

---

### CENTER RESEARCH

---

## New Jersey State of Affordable Rental Housing

The New Jersey State of Affordable Rental Housing (NJSOARH) project led by Professors Seymour, Newman, and Payne, is exploring rental housing affordable to lower income households in NJ and processes that shape housing insecurity.

## Faith-based Affordable Housing Research Project

Led by senior researcher, Nadia Mian, the faith-based affordable housing research project examines the role of houses of worship across the country in building affordable housing on their property, and how they advocate for and change land use and zoning policy. Faith-based organizations have always been involved in community development, including housing, but as congregations struggle with declining attendance and large, underutilized properties, many houses of worship are looking at how they can repurpose their buildings to continue their mission work and remain vital members of the community. With student research associate Kyle Cruz, the research project looks at how municipalities are changing zoning regulations by creating religious overlay zones and reducing parking requirements to allow houses of worship to build affordable housing. Preliminary findings also reveal that municipalities are creating capacity building programs for houses of worship to explore their property's development potential. The result is a change in neighborhood dynamics as houses of worship become active partners and stakeholders in the provision of affordable housing.

---

## INTERSECTIONS

### (A Focus on Affiliated Faculty Researchers)

---

**CARA CUI TE**, Assistant Extension Specialist

Professor Cara Cuite published three articles related to food security. The first co-authored article, entitled, “Habitual Food, Energy, and Water Consumption Behaviors among Adults in the United States: Comparing Models of Values, Norms, and Identity” was published in *Energy Research & Social Science*. Professor Cuite’s second co-authored article was published in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. The article, “entitled, “Re-envisioning Nutrition Instruction in Higher Education,” focuses on hybrid modes of learning, defining rigor and compassion in Higher Education, and key experiences for future nutrition educators (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2022.01.003>). Lastly, Professor Cuite’s article “Food Insecurity programming in urban areas: A case study of New Brunswick, NJ” with Lauren Errickson is forthcoming in the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*.

**ANDREA RESTREPO-MIETH**, Assistant Professor

Professor Restrepo-Mieth became technical advisor to the government of the province of Galápagos (CGREG) where she is assisting in the formulation of the first Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, and she participated in a panel on local water governance that the University of Bergen organized for World Water Day. She will present research at University College London's Shifting Narratives conference and at the World Planning Schools Congress.

**ERIC SEYMOUR**, Assistant Professor

Professor Eric Seymour published "Decline-induced displacement: the case of Detroit," with Joshua Akers in *Urban Geography* in February. Drawing on a case study of Detroit, the research finds evidence of displacement pressures driven by the collapse of home prices, not their escalation. These pressures stem from the intersection of forces operating at multiple scales, including the financialization of housing, austerity regimes of the local state, and the expansion of predatory real estate investment. The study examines displacement pressures in Detroit since the subprime lending crisis, which triggered a wave of mortgage foreclosures. Their research then examined the causes and effects of the subsequent tax foreclosure crisis in Detroit and the implications of increased real estate speculation fueled by growing foreclosure inventories. They argue a focus on these varieties of displacement offers a more complete understanding of the ongoing and highly racialized restructuring of US cities following the financial crisis. Eric also presented his paper entitled, "Corporate Landlords and Pandemic and Pre-Pandemic Evictions in Las Vegas," which examines evictions before and during the pandemic in Las Vegas.

**NAOMI UCHIDA**, Fulbright Visiting Professor

Fulbright Fellow Professor Naomi Uchida delivered the keynote address at the Urban Network Knowledge Asia symposium in Chiba, Japan in May. <https://ukna.asia/gentrification>

We conducted a short interview with Professor Uchida to learn more about her research.

1. Is gentrification in Japan different than what we see in North America?

There is no difference in the basic definition, but there are differences in the phenomena, such as the way the gentrifiers inflow.

2. How are neighborhoods changing in Japanese cities as a result of gentrification?

Tourism gentrification is the most visible phenomenon in Japan. The influx of tourism uses often encroaches on areas that are places of daily life, transforming the character of the area. It is more than a physical displacement; it is a loss of a sense of place.

3. What is being done to counteract these processes?

District planning (part of zoning regulations in Japan. Zoning in Japan is not as precise as in the U.S.) may be able to counter gentrification by regulating uses and height restrictions. However, policy changes may rather accelerate gentrification. For example, post-bubble urban renewal policies promote development, and tourism policies encourage the concentration of tourism-related uses.

---

## EVENTS

---

# Negotiating Social Futures

The Politics of Land Development and Value Capture  
During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic



**RUTGERS**  
Edward J. Bloustein School  
of Planning and Public Policy  
RALPH W. VOORHEES CENTER  
FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Case Study Conference  
September 22-23, 2022

**Urban Studies**  
FOUNDATION

Professors Mi Shih and Kathe Newman are hosting: Negotiating Social Futures case study conference on **September 22-23, 2022** at the Edward J. Bloustein School. The conference is part of an Urban Studies Foundation funded seminar series (project # USF-SSA-210213).



---

## STUDENT NEWS

---

**John Fidel Klarke Smith** is a Community Strategies Fellow with New Jersey Community Capital working on a housing plan for Salem, New Jersey this summer. He is also working with Professor James DeFilippis on a research project reporting on the landscape of cooperative and shared equity housing in the United States. **Mila Hamilton** and **Erica Copeland** are also working with Professor DeFilippis on this project.

**Smriti Singh** is doing an internship with the World Resources Institute and will be working on their Faith and Sustainability Initiative.

---

## ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

---

Former Voorhees Fellow and Graduating Senior **Jorge Alvarez** is working with MTV on a mental health campaign. He also received funding to work on a separate mental health campaign and resource and recently spoke at The White House about mental health, watch here <https://youtu.be/bhs1xCJzqYE> (advance to the 40:00 mark to see Jorge speak).

Former Voorhees Fellow and Graduating Senior **Lily Chang** completed her Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Honors Thesis on student housing in New Brunswick. She is participating in Running Start's Congressional Fellowship program and will be placed as a fellow in a congresswoman's office this Fall.

Former Research Assistant **Malembe Dupont Coper** will enter the doctoral program in urban planning at Cornell University Fall 2022.

Former Research Assistance **Wael Kanj** will be joining Gehl Architects for the summer. As an Apprentice, Wael will bring his mapping, analytical, and food planning skills to work with the New York and Copenhagen offices on a variety of projects. He will be focusing on their healthy foodscapes work to improve food security in cities around the world.

Former Voorhees Fellow **Brooke Margolin** was recently selected for the Governor James J. Florio Undergraduate Public Service Award at the Bloustein School graduation in May. This summer, she will be working with the Majority Staff of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C. She is an awardee of the Rutgers-Eagleton Washington Internship Award that will support her to live and work in the nation's capital. This fall, Brooke will be returning to Rutgers University to finish the Master of Public Health degree in Epidemiology at the School of Public Health. She will also be completing the Eagleton Graduate Fellowship as an Eagleton Alumni Awardee at the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

Former Voorhees Fellow **Neha Saju** graduated Summa Cum Laude and will be returning to the Bloustein school in Fall 2022 to complete the MPP program. In April, Neha presented her history thesis at the 28th Annual History Honors Conference and was recognized as a Paul Robeson Scholar. She was awarded the James Reed Award, which is given to the student with the best honors thesis presentation at the Rutgers History Honors Conference, and was selected to give a student scholar speech at the History Senior Celebration. In May, her article "Understanding ESSA: Reforming the Fundamental American Ideal of Education" was published in the Eagleton Political Journal. Neha was also awarded the Chancellor-Provost Leadership Award, the Class of 1988 Endowed Scholarship, as well as two fellowship awards from the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (James Neilson Fellowship & Agnes McDede Murray Fellowship). She has been accepted into the Eagleton Graduate Fellowship Program in Politics and Government.

Former Research Associate **Benjamin Theresa**, RU PhD 2015, was promoted to associate professor with tenure at Virginia Commonwealth University. Teresa's scholarship focuses on understanding contemporary urban political-economic change and how individuals and communities affected by those changes develop political capacity and autonomy to address challenges and to collaboratively realize common goals. More specifically, Teresa studies the process of financialization, or the increasing role of financial institutions, actors, and logic in real estate development, housing, and education. He also examines eviction and housing instability and the political economy of the arts and arts policy. He is the co-founder and co-director of the RVA Eviction Lab, where he pursues community-responsive, public scholarship on eviction and housing instability that supports organizing and policy-making efforts.

Former Research Associate **Natalie Tse** is currently the Assistant Township Planner for the Township of Old Bridge, New Jersey. In this capacity, she works on comprehensive planning, redevelopment efforts, and land development reviews. Through collaboration with fellow planning professionals and engagement with the community of Old Bridge, Natalie has deepened her understanding of local planning issues that she first explored at the Bloustein School.

Former Research Assistant **Ooha Uppalapati** will enter the doctoral program in urban planning at the University of California Berkeley Fall 2022.

Former Voorhees Fellow **Isaac Velez** spoke at Spring Convocation. He will be working at Deloitte Consulting in their Government and Public Services Practice as a Summer Scholar. Isaac will return to the Bloustein school in Fall 2022 to complete the final year of the MPP program.